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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses a study which examined the manifestation of racial epistemology in the teaching and learning of multicultural education in three university classrooms. In this research, ethnographic data were collected and interpreted to understand preservice teachers' divergent responses toward multicultural education classrooms. Based on the data, the paper suggests that responses to multicultural teacher education need to be understood in terms of preservice teachers' conceptions of their own cultural identity in which the self and others are situated in an oppositional relation, and that by not challenging preservice teachers' binary epistemological world, multicultural education is seen as education for minority students and has little impact on preservice teachers' beliefs, values, and attitudes. The implementation of multicultural teacher education needs to involve a reconstruction of preservice teachers' cultural identities in which relations with self and others are reconceptualized in a culturally diverse, and yet democratic, society. Contains a 55-item bibliography. (BT)

A Challenge Toward Binary Racial Epistemology: The Reconstruction of Cultural Identity in Multicultural Teacher Education

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Abstract

This paper examines the manifestation of racial epistemology in the teaching and learning of multicultural education in three university classrooms. In this research, ethnographic data were collected and interpreted to understand preservice teachers' divergent responses toward multicultural education classrooms. Based on the data, the author suggests that responses to multicultural teacher education needs to be understood in terms of preservice teachers' conceptions of their own cultural identity in which the self and others are situated in an oppositional relation. Without challenging preservice teachers' binary epistemological world, multicultural education is seen as education for minority students, resulting in little impact on preservice teachers' beliefs, values, and attitudes. Therefore, the author argues that the implementation of multicultural teacher education needs to involve a reconstruction of preservice teachers' cultural identities in which relations with self and others are reconceptualized in a culturally diverse, and yet democratic society.

Introduction

The university is not isolated from society. Public opinion about educational goals has a strong impact on education movements. In the midst of educational reform aiming at building a stronger nation for global economic competition, the institution of the public school has largely been perceived as a factory for producing future productive workers. Multicultural education, raising issues such as racial inequality, poverty, sexuality, religion, new immigrants, language and cultural diversity in public schools, has struck the nation's nerve and, not surprisingly, become a battleground for educational goals and the schools' curricula in the 90s. Although public opinion on multicultural education is quite divided, U.S. teacher education programs have increasingly acknowledged the need to prepare teachers for a culturally diverse society. Most teacher education programs take either an additive approach, offering a course of multicultural education, or an infusion approach to provide preservice teachers the knowledge and skills necessary for teaching in the next century (Gollnick, 1992, Banks, 1993).

Although there is little disagreement on the need to implement multicultural education in teacher education, the approaches are varied because people define the term "multicultural education" differently (Sleeter & Grant, 1994). As multicultural teacher education has generated a great deal of attention from researchers and various models have been proposed, the existing literature also suggest that the implementation of multicultural education has met wide-spread preservice teachers' resistance (McDiarmid, 1990a, 1990b; McLaughlin, Talbert, & Phelan, 1990; Davis, 1995). Moreover, some research suggests that multicultural education courses have little effect on preservice teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives on multicultural teaching (McDiarmid,

1990a, 1990b; Chávez, O'Donnell, & Gallegos, 1994; Zeichner, 1996). In response to the difficulty of both teaching and learning multicultural education in the existing teacher education programs, literature has focused attention on **a)** the examination of preservice teachers' values and beliefs that shape their perspectives on multicultural education (Haberman, 1991; Davis, 1995; Young & Buchanan, 1996); **b)** the reconceptualization of curriculum and instruction strategies in relation to what counts as meaningful learning (Lesko & Bloom, in press; Rodriguez & Sjostrom, 1997); and **c)** the analysis of existing programs and the necessity of reconstructing the institutional context of teacher education program (Haberman, 1987; Henley & Young, 1987; Masemann & Mock, 1986; Nyce, 1990; Orlikow & Young, 1993; Young, 1995; Shade, 1995). While most research focuses on pedagogical approaches to conducting multicultural teacher education more effectively, the values and perspectives taught in such courses are rarely examined. In other words, when we find that preservice teachers' attitudes and perspectives change little after they receive multicultural education, most research focuses on the pedagogy of deconstructing preservice teachers' racial epistemology so that they can become effective teachers for culturally diverse classrooms in the near future. However, few researchers pay attention to whether preservice teachers' racial epistemologies are reinforced and legitimated in the classrooms of multicultural teacher education.

When multicultural education means different things to different people, the question thus becomes, what kinds of approaches proposed in the discourse of multicultural education, with best intentions, are running the risk of playing the same game, but just changing the positions of the players; and what kind of approach may offer a new vision of human relations in a culturally

diverse society where democracy can be actualized. This is an important question, not only for understanding the phenomenon of resistance, but also for understanding what was actually learned behind the "positive response" toward multicultural education. What do preservice students mean when they make a statement such as "I have a really good class" or "I have learned a lot from this class" in their final evaluation? Could it be possible a "good class" can further reinforce preservice teachers' racial epistemologies through motivating them to teach underprivileged children?

Postmodern and feminist theories have suggested that the oppositional notion of "self versus the others" is a mechanism of maintaining white supremacy and cultural hegemony in the North Atlantic culture in which race and ethnicity have been generally reduced to a discourse of the Other (Giroux, 1991). It may be helpful to ask whether the discourse and practices of multicultural education further reinforce the racial epistemology of seeing the self as opposed to the Other? Or is it possible for multicultural education to be understood as an effort to revision cultural communication in which the self and others' relationship need to be reconceptualized and reconstructed in the existing educational and social system?

Meaningful learning can only occur when learners actively participate in the construction of the meanings of their learning experiences. When racial epistemology is unavoidably manifested in pre-service teachers' conception of what knowledge is of most worth, for whose interest to learn, as well as how to be a "good" teacher, for meaningful multicultural education to take place, it is then necessary to understand how preservice teachers situate themselves in the discourse of

multicultural education, and how they relate to the educational problems identified in multicultural literature. In other words, it is necessary to understand how the self/others relation is exercised (constructed and reconstructed) in preservice teachers' perceptions of who they are, why they need to care about the educational problems that are identified in the discourse of multicultural education, and why they need to learn to be multicultural teachers. Therefore, the difficulty of implementing multicultural teacher education might be further understood in the context of a struggle to understand the self/other relation in cultural communication, a collective effort of constructing and revisioning the collective self, and the reconceptualization of what cultural literacy means.

The research issue that I propose to investigate is the construction and deconstruction of racial epistemology within the discourse of multicultural education and the implementation of multicultural teacher education: What do we mean by cultural literacy in multicultural education? Whose culture are we learning? For whom are we becoming multicultural teachers? Where do preservice teachers situate themselves in the discourse of multicultural education? Why and how is racial epistemology reconfirmed by some of the multicultural literature they read? How are the self and others understood in multicultural literature? Do preservice teachers' perceptions of their cultural identities affect their perception of what is worth learning in teacher education program? Can the reconstruction of preservice teachers' cultural identities take place in a multicultural education class? How? And what struggles do preservice teachers have when the reconstruction of racial epistemology takes place in multicultural class? What struggle do they have to become "good teachers" by their own definition?

Methodology

In this research, I present ethnographic data on preservice teachers' conceptions of the relationship between "self" and "other" in the reconceptualization of cultural literacy in Indiana University - Bloomington teacher education multicultural classes. This participant observational fieldwork approach consists of a) long term participation and observation in a field setting (classroom) b) careful recording of interviews and some class discussion; c) analytic induction applied to field notes and transcripts of classroom discussion and interviews; and d) detailed description through use of narrative quotations (Erickson, 1986). The data reported were gathered as part of a seven-semester ethnographic study (1993 fall, 1995 fall - 1997 spring) of the multicultural teacher education program at Indiana University - Bloomington. During the years that I collected data, multicultural education was offered as a three credit-hour required course before students were admitted into the teacher education program. There were approximately five sessions open for elementary major students and seven sessions open for secondary major students each semester. Each class consisted of approximately 35 students. In this research, ten classes of secondary multicultural education were observed and 350 students' reflections on their learning experiences were examined. The research began with my participant observation of one session conducted by a white female doctoral student in Fall 1993. It continued in my own classes from Fall 1995 to Spring 1997 which included one semester of team teaching with a female doctoral student from South Africa in Fall 1995 and my own class from Spring 1996 to Spring 1997. Over seven semesters, ten classes of secondary multicultural education were observed. I obtained permission from both my colleagues and the students to tape record some class sessions, and to photocopy written assignments, and journal entries of preservice teachers'

perspectives on multicultural education. I also conducted individual interviews with my colleague and her students. Individual weekly meetings with my students were used as a resource for understanding their thoughts on multicultural education, their expectations and frustrations of their education at Indian University, and their visions of their future career. My study originated out of concern that I had for the preparation of teachers for a democratic society. As a female international student and instructor from Taiwan, my national, racial, gender, and class identity shaped the relationships I had with my students, fellow doctoral students, faculty members, the research oriented institution located in the heartland of America, and the discourse of multicultural education on both the national and international level.

The reproduction of racial epistemology in multicultural class:

Preservice teachers' perception on what knowledge is of most worth in multicultural education in the cultural and institutional context

Students' perceptions of what knowledge is of most worth to learn and how it should be learned are largely conditioned and shaped by their life experiences within the social and cultural context. During the period (1993-1997) that the research took place, both global economic competition and the development of computer technology highlighted the notion of seeing the world as a global village. American popular culture has fashioned the values of cultural diversity through mass media. To many teenagers and undergraduate students, being "different" is seen as being trendy and "cool". And "being cool," in this country, is very important. For most students, IU-Bloomington is a liberal place offering them an "eye opening educational experience." Students' comments such as "I think this [IU-Bloomington] is a good school because we get to be

taught by teachers from other countries" suggest that some students value cultural diversity and see it as a privilege for their educational experience. However, the conservative perspective on social and education issues is also popular among students. Some students comment that Rush Limbaugh is their "ideal." And Arthur Schlesinger, Jr's *The Disuniting America: Reflections on a multicultural Society* (1992), in which he argues that the multicultural education movement is a threat to the nation's cultural identity, is popular among many students. Major national events, such as the Rodney King beating, the L.A. Riots, and O.J. Simpson's trial focused public attention on the racial tensions within contemporary society. University students were very alert to racial tensions, although they may have different interpretations of the cause of these conflicts and what these social events mean to them.

During three and half academic years in the ten sections of multicultural teacher education, there were only 13 non-white students out of 350 students enrolled in these classes. Among these ten sections of multicultural education, two section had no students of color at all. About two-third of students in the program are from predominately white, Christian small towns in Indiana or adjoining states. Students who came from cities had mainly attended suburban high schools. Only four out of 350 students were from inner city high schools. The numbers of female and male students were roughly equal. Because multicultural education is required for students before they enter the teacher education program, very few students in these classes have knowledge of either education theory or methods based on formal academic training. Most of the students are between the age of 19 and 21 years old. Therefore, it is understandable that students' perspectives presented in class are largely derived from their own lived experience, and are heavily influenced

by popular views on culture and education. Before students take multicultural education, they have preconceived notions of what multicultural education is about, what it should be about, as well as the right way to learn it.

When preservice teachers were asked about what they would like to learn from this class, two phrases "other culture" or "different culture" appeared in 95% of their answers. The following statements are typical responses: "I want to learn more about other cultures"; "I want to learn more about the different cultures in our society"; "I expect to learn more about how different social groups learn and how I can better teach them"; "I want to learn about how people from other cultures react and how they are treated here"; "I want to learn ways to handle the education of different cultures"; "I want to learn how to deal with different cultures of people."

In their statements, a notion of learning about "the others" is manifested in their vision of what multicultural education is about. The logic is that we are the whites, the others are the people of color. Since multicultural education is about the education of learning "others' culture," it is thus an education about the others and for the others. At the beginning of the semester, when preservice teachers were asked to describe the kinds of schools they plan to teach in after they graduate from IU, approximately thirty out of thirty-five students in each section responded that they plan to teach in small towns with predominantly white populations. Therefore, it was not a surprise to hear that they often wondered why they needed to learn multicultural education in teacher education since they assume they will not be teaching minority students in their class. Although multicultural educators have consistently argued that multicultural education is not

minority education (Banks, 1993; Perry & Fraser, 1993; Gay, 1994), but an education for all American children, this image still remains firmly fixed in the minds of preservice teachers. The following sections on what is taught in class and students' reaction explains that what was absent in the multicultural classes may result in reinforcing students' preconceived notions on multicultural education for minority children and thus may have limited impact on students' racial epistemology in which the self and others are oppositionally situated.

What is taught in class

In the ten sections I observed and taught, my colleagues and I took the cultural-general approach (Grant and Secada, 1990) in which the concern is to prepare teachers to be successful in any context that involves cross-cultural interactions. We emphasized interacting with cultures as opposed to studying about cultures. A one-day field experience to an Indianapolis public school was required in this class for students to contextualize the theory and information they learned from the class. Since this one-day field trip was the only "official" moment for the students to experience direct contact with a large population of minority students during the semester that they took multicultural class, both my colleges and I used life histories and personal narratives, novels, documentary videos, guest/panel speakers stories, simulation games to help students to examine different and often divergent perspectives on issues of social inequality and schooling. These activities were intended to help students to develop the ability to empathize with people in various cultural and social condition. Required readings included *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives* (Banks & Banks, 1993), *Affirming Diversity* (Nieto, 1996), *Rethinking our classroom* (Bigelow, Minor, & Peterson, 1994), *Maggie's*

American Dream (Comer, 1989), *No-No boy* (Okada, 1992), *Maus I* (Speigelman,1986), *The Joy Luck Club* (Tan, 1989), *China Boy* (Lee, 1994), *The Education of a WASP* (Stalvey, 1989), *Hunger of Memory* (Rodriguez, 1983), *Savage Inequalities* (Kozol, 1991), *Inside separate worlds: life stories of young black, Jews, and Latinos* (Schoem, 1994). In class discussions, we tried to help students examine the manifestation of cultural hegemony in educational institutions. The benefits and limits of various approaches to multicultural curriculum reforms were discussed (Banks, 1988). We wanted students to see that multicultural education prepares all American children to become democratic citizens who can exercise the principles of democracy in a culturally diverse society. We focused largely on social inequality and its impact on academic achievement. We used statistical data on the recent demographic shift in the United States to strengthen our argument on the need for and demand of multicultural teacher education (Pallas, Natriello, and McDill, 1989). We suggested that there will be a wider gap between the backgrounds of teachers in public schools and their pupils because the population of public school students is increasingly diverse, whereas the teacher education students are overwhelmingly white, monolingual, and usually lack intercultural experience (AACTE), 1987, 1989). We explained that future teachers need to learn multicultural teaching because they need to overcome the cultural gap between them and their students. We challenged euro-centric curricula and suggested that multicultural curriculum is what we need. Institutionalized white privileges were examined in tracking, textbook knowledge, language policy, and school funding. Readings such as Nitza M. Hidalgo's "Multicultural Teacher Introspection" (Hidalgo, 1993) and Peggy McIntosh's "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" (McIntosh, 1989) coupled with the assignment of self analysis, were designed to help students examine how their

views, values, and experiences of schooling are shaped by their race, class, and sex/gender identity.

Reaction

Examining and interpreting students' evaluations and statements on written assignments, in class discussion, and in interviews, revealed an interesting pattern. While students overwhelmingly thought multicultural education was important and the instructor's teaching approach was appropriate, they were uncomfortable, at times resentful, toward the readings and discussion of the manifestation of white privilege in social and educational inequality. They said, "This class opened my eyes to things that I had never thought of before"; "This class was one of the best I've taken at IU due to the instructor's enthusiasm and specific knowledge displayed"; "Overall, I feel that I learned a great deal from this course. The course opened my mind a great deal to help me realize how bad off many children are in the educational system we have in our country. I think I also learned things that will help me deal with a multicultural class." When they were asked what they liked most about the class, they expressed their appreciation of the teaching approach which used open discussion to create a space for students to examine various perspectives on controversial educational issues addressed by the class readings. Typical responses included: "I really enjoyed the discussion which our class participated in. We had a wide spectrum of opinions which contributed to very detailed and thought provoking discussion."; "What I like most is being able to share opinions with others and becoming friends with peers in this class. The class became very close"; "She is a total sweetheart. She tries to make class fun and stimulates in depth conversation"; "My reaction to the course is that I thought it was a great

learning environment. I felt comfortable speaking in front of my class. It made me have different, more positive views of other cultures compared to the way I used to feel."

However, when asked about what they liked least about the class, their responses changed: "The content material of the course can, at times, be very revealing and disheartening, but I guess that is what made the course best. Often we have to hear the ugly facts of life to know the truth."; "It was not about learning other culture - we argue about white privilege. It should have discussed many other cultures which defines multiculturalism. Most of things we discussed were not part of multiculturalism." During class discussion, four white male students questioned whether this class is a "blaming game." One white female wrote in her journal in responding to the reading of "White Privilege": "the sole purpose is to make us feel guilty for taking advantage from minority people and make excuses for minority students' poor academic achievement." In individual interviews, a few white students said they felt they were the "new victims" in the climate of "politically correct crap."

The emerging pattern was that the majority of white students liked to learn about "other" people's cultural and educational experiences. They also expressed great concern for "others' children" in disadvantaged learning conditions. However, when institutional racism and cultural hegemony were identified as major problems of education, the majority became defensive. They either felt that they needed to defend the legitimacy and morality of western cultural heritage, or they expressed guilt about who they were. The mentality of self versus the others is clear in their understanding of institutional racism. They either said that "I am not the one who owns the

slaves, why should I be blamed for the social injustice?" or "I feel guilty about being a white person in this society." In their statements, the self and the other relation is clear-cut and oppositional. The only difference among white students' reactions to institutionalized racism was whether they felt responsible for the social and educational condition of (the "others") Others. In the self-analysis assignment, they often stated that they felt lucky about what they have and felt pity for children who don't have the same things that they enjoy in their daily lives. What differentiated students to accept or resist multicultural education is whether they believe the whites (we) are partially responsible for the social and educational condition of the non-whites children (others). But whether they resist multicultural education or not, the oppositional notion of the self and others relation was not changed by the class. In fact, it may have been reinforced.

When the relation between self and others is understood as an oppositional one, the cultural identity of the larger self, the American self, is somehow lost. When students argued that if American Indians have the right to fight for their cultural heritage, so do white Americans have the right to fight for the European cultural heritage, their notion of culture identity is somehow understood as a fixed entity which is attached to racial identity. The underlying assumption is that once you claim your racial identity, you then have the ownership of a certain cultural heritage. Also, when the self and other is understood as a competitive relation, the aim of public education is narrowly understood as individual academic achievement. One male student who expressed great concern for the inequality of education and firmly believed that public schools need changing insisted in class discussion that a national core curriculum is the solution. When he was asked by the instructor about the kind of core curriculum he meant, he said he meant

euro-centric curriculum because it provides the basic knowledge all students need to learn. Although other students quickly challenged his statement, he remained convinced that a euro-centric national core curriculum would actually help socially disadvantaged students to advance within the educational system. In his argument, the euro-centric national core curriculum became the means to reach equality of educational opportunity.

The reconstruction of preservice teachers' cultural identity

In the section I observed and taught, cultural hegemony was challenged in content knowledge, pedagogy, hidden curriculum and school culture, and educational policy on resource distribution. When the morality of Euro-centric cultural identity was challenged in almost every aspect of schooling, white students felt that they suddenly lost faith in what they once held dear. They had a great degree of anxiety in constructing a new and different vision of themselves. What was missing was the philosophical ground for a new vision of American cultural identity that they could relate to and benefit from. After examining the class reading and pedagogical approach, I realized that a new vision of American cultural identity based on multiculturalism was never directly confronted and discussed in any of these sections between 1993 to 1995. Although metaphors such as tossed salad or quilting were often used by the instructors in these sections to create an image of cultural complexity, their value was vaguely understood. In other words, the instructors did not address the interests of the white students, nor did they and myself differentiate what constitutes racial identity and American cultural identity.

When we used the statistics on the increasing population of minority children to support our

argument for the increasing demand for multicultural education, we did not realize that we reinforced students' conception of seeing multicultural education as minority education. We did not ask ourselves, if we follow the same argument, do we conclude that if the minority students decreased in number, there is no need for multicultural education? With this logic, we failed to challenge the oppositional conception of the self-other relation; we also failed to reconstruct the relation between the individual self and the larger self, the society. When we focused on helping white students to see white privilege, we failed to help them see that they are victims of a racial epistemology in which distorted images of the self and the other are exercised in daily life. In short, helping white students to begin to reconstruct a new cultural identity through a multicultural class was absent.

In addressing the relation between self and the democratic society, Dewey provides a grounding based on his idea of the progress of social intelligence through a democratic way of life to understand the function of multicultural literacy in education. To Dewey, democracy enables a society to control its own evolution. Growth itself is the only moral end. Human intelligence with its creativity, sensitivity, imagination, and moral awareness helps to solve present problems of human well-being and provides the means for on-going growth of both the self and community. The principles to determine the progress of a society are a) the interests of a group are shared by all its member; and b) the fullness and freedom with which it interacts with other groups. To Dewey, the more interests shared and the freer the interaction with other groups, the better the society. Therefore, education is understood as a way society renews itself through sharing interests and experience among social members and across various communities (Dewey, 1944).

A culturally diverse society can be a society in which individual and community are isolated from each other. The traditional idea of bringing people together is to assimilate people from the marginal into the mainstream. In other words, the people in the margins have to give up what they treasure internally in order to become an ideal American - based upon the dominant and idealized version of American life. But it is far away from a democratic way of life if we understand democracy as a mode of associated living, a communicated experience. Dewey has suggested that an undesirable society is one which internally and externally sets up barriers to free intercourse and communication of experience. Adopting Dewey's criteria for a desirable society, we thus can understand the repressive elements in American society and education because there is lack of a communicative element.

Multicultural literacy, unlike E.D. Hirsh's version of cultural literacy as a fixed entity that can be listed (Hirsch, 1988), is a conscious effort of searching for the American self through communication among individuals and groups. Culture is not a fixed entity, but a collective consciousness of constructing the relation that one has with others. This relation is both changeable and negotiable. Sandra Rosenthal's notion of the emerging self-consciousness in her interpretation of Dewey's understanding on the self and community is helpful in understanding the self/other relation.:

> To have a self is to have a particular type of ability: the ability to be aware of one's behavior as part of the social process of adjustment, as an acting agent within the context of other acting agents. Not only can selves exist only in relationship to other selves, but no absolute line can be drawn between our own selves and the selves of others, since our own selves are there for and in our experience only insofar as others exist and enter into our experience. The origins and foundation of the self, like those of mind, are social or intersubjective. As Dewey notes, it's

through social interaction that "the self is both formed and brought to consciousness."[1] (1993: 377).

Without the recognition of others and the interaction with others, the self does not exist because it can only be actualized in relation with others. And the "other" is actually the other side of the self. The self and other experience is thus interchangeable. Therefore, multicultural literacy can not be a set of facts, but rather a consistent effort to understand the ever-changing selves manifested in the communicative relation between the self and the others. In light of Dewey's notion of self-consciousness, we thus can understand that one-dimensional and stagnant cultural literacy does not just commit intellectual suicide, but is a denial of the selves.

Convinced that the reconstruction of preservice teachers' cultural identities needs to take place in multicultural teacher education, I took a different approach to teaching multicultural education in the spring of 1996. I highlighted the reconstruction of American cultural identity in my class. I challenged the dichotomized thinking about self and other. I assigned and guided readings on William Pinar's "Notes on understanding curriculum as a racial text" (Pinar, 1993), Michael Apple's "Cultural Politics and the text" (1993), Herbert Kohl's "The Politics of Children's Literature: What's wrong with the Rosa Parks Myth" and "I won't learn from you! Confronting student resistance" (Kohl, 1994); a research assignment on several texts of Rosa Park's role in the civil rights movement in current Social Studies textbooks that were available in IU education library; and a follow up discussion on both readings and research assignments. First, I asked my

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. Art as Experience, in The Later Works, vol. 10, ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 286

students to examine whether Herbert Kohl's argument on the distorted images of minority Americans was valid, based upon their own research findings. Secondly, I asked students to reflect on the following statement made by Pinar on American cultural identity:

> "We are what we know." We are, however, what we do not know. If what we know about ourselves - our history, our culture, our national identity - is deformed by absence, denials, and incompleteness, then our identity - both as individual and as Americans - is fragmented. The fragmented self is a repressed self, that is, it "contains" repressed element. Such a self lacks access both to itself and to the world. Repress, the self's capacity for intelligence, for informed action, even for simple functional competence is impaired. Its sense of history, gender, and politics is incomplete and distorted (1993: 61).

Lastly, I use Kohl's "The Politics of Children's Literature: What's wrong with the Rosa Parks Myth" and "I won't learn from you! Confronting student resistance" (Kohl, 1994) to help students understand Apple's theory of the role the textbook industry plays in cultural politics, reshaping and defining the experience of subordinate groups in terms that fit the values and ideologies of the ruling groups in society. And it leaves to teachers who are willing to critically examine the conditions necessary for all students to participate in the creation and recreation of meanings and values through reading the text, to consciously invite students to bring their own classed, raced, religious, and gendered experiences with them to accept, reinterpret, and reject what counts as legitimate knowledge selectively (Apple, 1993).

By adopting Pinar's argument that American cultural identity is deformed because what was taught in the traditional curriculum is a partial and distorted story about what it means to be an American, the rationale of why multicultural education is not a minority education became clear to students. They began to realize that for Americans to know who they are, they must learn a

history which tells the struggles and visions of life that various groups of people had and have. When a cultural literacy only tells one side of the story, it loses educational meaning because the richness and the complexity of human experience is missing in it. A society is not able to transcend itself if its social members are sitting in the dark and do not even know who they are and where they have been. And this lack of knowledge of collective selves as well as the lack of will to learn about those selves is destructive for both individuals and society. Students were able to see that they can be empowered by learning multicultural education because they, too, are victims of racial epistemology and racially biased schooling systems. They can see that there are no winners in an unjust society. A female white student wrote on her vision of multicultural education:

> The school system has failed to incorporate the history of the non-white Americans into the textbooks. Minority students are continuously learning about a history that does not include them, and they are aware of it. In excluding the part that the minorities played in our society, we are not only cheating them, but we are also cheating ourselves. We cannot completely know ourselves without also knowing others. In learning about different cultures and histories, we are also learning about our own. When this does not happen, not only the repressed suffer - although their suffering is the greatest - white people suffer as well. They have lost touch with reality, their own and others. ... International understanding is essential for survival, but most students don't acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for competing in the global community .... For us to deny everyone and everything around us is to deny ourselves the potential for personal, national, and world growth. In conclusion, multicultural education is meant to restructure schools so that all students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function in an ethnically and racially diverse nation and world. It is not only for minorities, it is not against Western tradition, and it will not divide the nation. Multicultural education is necessary in order for all students, White and non-White, to understand themselves and the world around them. In denying an adequate and equal education for all students, we are only hurting ourselves in the long round. Hindering another person's success will only cause hate and discontent in a country that is already full of it.

Conclusion

In this research, I suggest that the reconceptualization of the self and the other relation is essential in multicultural teacher education. The self can not be actualized until the other is recognized as the other side of the self. The will to communicate with others is driven by the interest to know more about deeper and richer meanings of the self. The self and the other exist interdependently. The self is ever changing; so is culture, the larger self. The reconstruction of preservice teachers' cultural identity is thus a small step toward multicultural literacy. However, it is not a happy-ever-after ending story (Lesko & Bloom, In press). Based on my interpretation of what was taught on the understanding of cultural communication in the sections I observed and taught, there is still a long way to go toward an understanding of what happens in the class on both teaching and learning multicultural education. Multicultural curriculum aims to prepare future citizens in a pluralistic society in which democracy can be understood as mutual respect among social members and communities. Hilary Putnam and Ruth Anna Putnam's discussion on the meaning of respect in a pluralistic society where a common conception of political and social justice needs to be reached through cultural understanding is worth quoting at length here:

> A pluralistic society, as we understand the term, is not simply a society in which many different racial, ethnic, and religious groups can be found; it is not simply a society in which all these groups enjoy equal civil and political rights; rather, a pluralistic society is a society in which members of each group respect the cultures and values of the other groups. Respect, unlike mere tolerance, requires some knowledge of the other culture; one cannot respect what one does not know at all. Obviously, in as plural a society as ours, that knowledge will be extremely superficial with respect to most other groups, but one would hope that everyone would have some non-superficial knowledge of the history, tradition, art, or literature of at least one group not his or her own. John Rawls has expressed the hope that persons with widely divergent conceptions of the good might nevertheless come to agree on a common conception of political and social justice through what he calls an overlapping consensus. We are suggesting that such an

> overlapping consensus requires that members of the society can communicate with one another concerning the values by which they live. What that involves is more than simply sharing a language; it involves a willingness to find out where the other persons "come from" - the slang expression has got it exactly right. Just as I cannot understand your joy when it rains until I find out that you come from a part of the world that suffers from severe droughts, so I cannot understand why you react with anger to some expression I use until I find out that it has been used historically to denigrate people like you. ..... Only when we try to understand where each of us comes from, what baggage of sufferings and of preconceptions we carry with us, can we hope to achieve an overlapping consensus (1993: 373-374).

Unfortunately, when my colleague and I criticized the traditional curriculum which contains very little respect for the culture of the non-white communities because the knowledge and viewpoints are exclusively presented through the eyes of the dominant culture in American society, what we have done in our multicultural classes was still far away from actualizing the meaning of mutual respect in cultural communication. In the sessions that I observed and taught between 1993-1995, cultural literacy was understood on a very superficial level. We emphasized interacting with cultures as opposed to studying about cultures. But interacting with cultures is only understood in the context of how students might react or think in responding to certain teaching approaches or curricula context with very limited connections to historical context, let alone philosophical ground. We did not reach the symbolic level of understanding cultural values that condition both individual and group behaviors in their epistemological world. In other words, the interaction with culture is not understood either in a historical or a philosophical context. For instance, students generally know that Chinese culture values hard work and self-discipline. However, why such a value is highlighted in Chinese culture is not understood on a philosophical ground. The Chinese notion of self realization or even if Chinese have the notion of self actualization is

unknown to most students. Thus, when a student made a comment about some Chinese American students being overachievers because they spent too much time on home work, regardless of his over generalization, the student did not know that the notion of overachiever does not exist in the Chinese language and culture. Philosophically speaking, Chinese view everyone as an underachiever. Only through hard work, externally and internally, can one become a person who actualizes one's potential morally and intellectually. Very few people in Chinese history have been recognized for this achievement of becoming a person who can actualize his or her moral and intellectual potential. Mencious (371-289 B.C.), one of the most influential thinkers on the goodness of human nature, suggests that moral power is inherent in everyone's nature. Every individual is "complete in himself"; every individual can become a sage; and everyone is equal to everyone else (Chan, 1963). Hard work and self-discipline thus can be understood as the driving force to become a moral being. And the reward and punishment does not really come externally but rather internally through consistent reflection on the self.

A true respect consists of the will to learn, not just about what people do, but why people do what they do. Without an understanding of the symbolic level of human behavior, we tolerate difference instead of appreciating the rich meanings of various perceptions of human life. Learning about the history and philosophy behind cultural behaviors instead of generalizing cultural behaviors is essential for preparing teachers for a culturally diverse society. Unfortunately, the existing curriculum in the IU teacher education program does not recognize the need for learning the deeper meaning of cultural interaction in teaching. Seeing cultural studies as somehow irrelevant to teaching is not uncommon among faculty members in

education. One male faculty member once commented that he thinks that a class of multicultural education is unnecessary because students can learn cultures from reading the newspaper and magazines. This faculty member obviously did not understand the distinction between phenomena and philosophy. When we can pick up cultural phenomena from social events that are selected by mass media, we may not understand the rationale behind it, let alone of having meaningful communication among social members and communities. People might have more chance to meet with each other, but more contact might not increase deeper mutual understanding.

The current IU teacher education program does not include explicit examination of the phenomenon of culture. The systematic study of culture usually is assumed to take place in the discourse of anthropology or of cultural studies. While there are often prejudices and hidden assumptions associated with these discourses, they often allow students to examine "culture" as structure and as contest, not simply as a common consensual arrangement between people who live in the same country. This examination may provide us with a necessary counterpoint for understanding students' behaviors. In other words, while we emphasized interacting with cultures as opposed to studying about cultures in our multicultural teacher education classes, we did not really reach a deeper meaning of interacting with culture because we did not fully understand the complicated personal histories of our student, nor the students we were studying. The critical problem is in constructing a space where it becomes possible to understand how learning is interpreted, what the roles of teachers might be, and how to "be" together as learners without sacrificing or sanctifying any of the parameters of our differences. In order to construct such a

space, it seems to me that deeper knowledge of cultures and of histories is necessary. While stressing the importance of understanding where students come from on historical and philosophical grounds in teaching. It is also necessary to note that the symbolic level of understanding cultural communication in the educational context is far beyond any three credit hour course for students without any prior knowledge of education. However, if we do think that a deeper level of human understanding and communication is necessary for teaching in a pluralistic society, teacher education programs could require students to take two to three cultural studies courses from other departments such as African Studies, Afro-American studies, Central Eurasian Studies, Latin American Studies, Near Eastern Cultures Studies, or East Asian Culture Studies. While most American students do not comprehend the cultural worlds that exist across either the Pacific Ocean or Mexico border, multicultural teacher education could lay the ground work for preservice teachers to develop a global vision.

The dichotomized thinking of the self and others has been deeply seated in American's mentality and has its hurtful consequences. When Americans are obsessed with the notion of being the number one country of the world, school reform has been largely focused on the basics: math, science, reading, and writing. It is a pity that excellence can be narrowly defined as academic achievement, let alone further narrowed to math, science, reading, and writing. This has covered up the deepest wound in American society and education where social injustice has set the barriers for meaningful communication among social members and groups. While multicultural education stresses the importance of academic achievement, I would like to suggest that cultural identity gives meanings to educational experience. Without an effort to search and understand a

meaningful communicative relation with social members and communities through education, the journey for academic success may very well become the journey for self-alienation through education. It is easier to become the number one country of the world in math, science, reading, and writing than to face the hard question of who we are as well as how we can construct a meaningful communicative relation with each other in a pluralistic society and world.

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